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## Letters to The Times

### Blow Seen to African Unity

#### Organization's Rejection of Congo's Plea for Aid Criticized

TO THE EDITOR:

The Congo's internal difficulties necessitating the intervention of foreign troops are bound to produce intensified repercussions in the weeks ahead, especially in the field of international polemics. While condemning the rebels for the senseless slaughter of innocent hostages, we must also lament the damaging blow dealt another body, the Organization of African Unity.

Since its birth in Addis Ababa almost two years ago, the O.A.U. has grown in stature. The organization's advocates saw in it a body which could present a united front to the so-called developed world in its attempt to struggle with the complex problems besetting the continent. The compromise solution worked out with regard to the Moroccan-Algerian border dispute only served to hearten the O.A.U.'s supporters.

#### Treatment by Nasser

But recently the organization's shining star has lost some of its glow. The trouble started with the ascendancy of Moise Tshombe, and his subsequent installation as Premier of the Congo. Nasser, who appears to want the best of both the Arab and black African worlds, precipitated the first crisis within the O.A.U. by his rather inhospitable treatment of Tshombe in Cairo several weeks ago.

It hardly mattered that Tshombe had every right to attend the conference; Nasser, with strong support from Ghana, succeeded not only in barring the Congo's legal representative from his seat but also in removing considerable luster from the O.A.U.'s positive achievements to date.

The Organization of African Unity, perhaps to "get even" with the rebel from Katanga, refused the Congo Government's urgent plea for an African police force to help the already demoralized and inept Congolese army halt the rebel advance. In its stead was placed the mediation committee headed by Jomo Kenyatta. Tshombe's only recourse was to turn to the white mercenaries, who were so successful in stemming the rebel advance. This action led to further criticism of Tshombe by the more militant of the African leaders.

#### Tshombe Plea Denied

Nasser, Nhrumah, Touré and Ben Bella have loosened verbal barrages against the Belgian paratroop landings—that "imperialist action"—designed though it was to save innocent victims from certain death. Before these attacks become more virulent, these gentlemen might well sit down and question their wisdom in denying Tshombe's initial plea for help. While yelling "neo-colonialism" for all the world to hear, they noticeably fail to condemn an action which we can only term as barbaric.

If the Organization of African Unity is to survive to serve the vast African continent and not disintegrate into a formalized debating society and personalized springboard, it must learn to function as a positive voice in the affairs of nations and must throw aside the shackles of pettiness which threaten to encumber it.

Idealism is a noble virtue; however, it is past time for the Organization of African Unity and its leaders to step into the everyday world of realities.

EDWARD H. BERMAN.

Brooklyn, Dec. 1, 1964.

*The writer recently returned from Nigeria, where for two years he was in the service of the Government.*